

Life on the Western Slope

I am writing this from Montrose, Colorado. And if you’ve never been to Montrose or the Western slope of Colorado you need to add it to your bucket list.

Like much of Colorado, this is an outdoor adventure oasis with the Black Canyon, the San Juan Mountains, Telluride and much more nearby. And the typical summer attire is a t-shirt, multi-pocketed hiking shorts, hiking boots, thick wool socks and a bronze tan. That is, unless you’re a rancher.

It also seems as though the people of the Western slope pride themselves on being a little different from those on the eastern side of the state. Which is often the case, we noticed, in many other states including Washington, Oregon, Montana and others.

Montrose is only a 36-minute flight from Denver. And although the population is only around 22,000 and even though it is a short flight, the commercial airplane flying you there from Denver is still large while the airport terminal is conveniently small but modern.

We are in Montrose shooting a WILD RIDES “From the Heart of America” six-episode television series and



Kevin Holten

interviewing quite an assortment of Montrose notables.

For example, we started off interviewing a younger construction superintendent, Clinton Kelleher, who grew up ranching near Montrose and working as a rodeo stock contractor but then, for at least a decade, was a hunting guide.

And he took great pleasure in testing the physical limits of those out-of-state hunters who, at the beginning of the hunting trek, bragged about how physically fit they were only to discover that they weren’t quite fit as they thought while gasping for air at Colorado’s higher elevations.

He also talked about being face to face with a momma grizzly while hunting alone and the myriads of thoughts running through his head as he realized that he was about to experience a painful death.

Apparently staring into the eyes of a huge

bear while it did the same to you is something that you don’t quickly forget, especially since the experience revisits you in your dreams from time to time.

He said he froze and although that doesn’t provide as colorful a story as something like wrestling a bear might, it was nevertheless the smartest thing he could have done as it prompted the momma bear to snort at him in disgust one last time and venture off towards its own little one.

We also interviewed realtor, rodeo announcer and auctioneer Don Martin. He’d grown up in Minnesota farming, ranching and eventually raising and selling horses and children who spent a great deal of their time competing in rodeo.

Don lost his father before he was old enough to even know who he was, and so mentors were a very important part of his life and the reason why he has dedicated a good part of his life to rodeo youth.

Now he’s also selling homes and ranches on the Western slope with great mountain views awash in clean, fresh air. And we discovered that real estate agents do a lot of work behind-the-scenes to make sure that your buying experience is much better than it otherwise might be.

We also discovered that there is a lot of care, honesty and integrity that goes into fitting a family with an appropriate property that is going to be right for them.

And these are just a couple more of the people who make the heart of America such a special place.

BCSD Prairie Elementary concert



No '90s country concert is complete without some "Boot Scootin' Boogie", performed by the 5th-8th grades.



The catchy tune "John Deere Green" was belted out by 3rd & 4th grades.



Ty and Ashton Polensky perform "Hot Cross Buns"



Preschoolers through grade 2 performed some popular '90s country tunes, like "Achy Breaky Heart"



photos | Julie Reis

A grand finale of "Fishin' in the Dark" was performed by the entire student body.


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PUBLIC NOTICE

Billings County Board of Equalization
The Unorganized Township and County Board of Equalization will meet on Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 1:00 pm in the commissioner's room at the county courthouse.
Each taxpayer has the right to appear before the appropriate local board of review or equalization and petition for correction of the taxpayer's assessment.

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